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REMARKS

Of the pending claims 1-18, claims 1-11 and 18 are indicated as allowable. Claims 12-14 are rejected and claims 15-17 are objected to as being substantial duplicates of claim 18. Claims 12-14 are canceled herein. Claim 15 is amended to include the limitations of claims 12-14. Claims 1-11 and 15-18 remain in the application.

Claims 15-17 are objected to as being substantial duplicates of claim 18. It is unclear how all three claims which are in a dependency chain can be a substantial duplicate of a single independent claim. As compared to claim 18, claim 15 does not include the step of "positioning the at least one ball inside of the tubular member"; (this is found in claim 16). Nor does claim 15 include "bending the tubular member about the bend die to form a bent pre-formed tubular member having at least one curved portion with a collapsed wall to form a caved in portion on the at least one curved portion". Claim 15 also requires "providing a bending assembly having a mandrel..." which is not found in claim 18. As compared to claim 18, claim 16 does not include "bending the tubular member about the bend die to form a bent pre-formed tubular member having at least one curved portion with a collapsed wall to form a caved in portion on the at least one curved portion". Claim 16 requires a mandrel, not found in claim 18. Claim 17 requires a mandrel and "the bent pre-formed tubular member having at least one curved portion having a recess therein"; neither are found in claim 18. In light of the above highlighted differences, Applicant requests that the objection of claims 15-17 be withdrawn. Claim 15 is amended to include the limitations of claims 12-14.

Based on the above, it is respectfully submitted that the claims are in a condition for allowance, which allowance is solicited. Please charge any fees that may be due to Deposit Account No. 07-0960.

Respectfully submitted,



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